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THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF  
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20301

JCSM-78-68

3 FEB 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Subject: Air Campaign Against North Vietnam (U)

1. (S) The effectiveness of the air campaign against North Vietnam (NVN) is currently reduced by weather associated with the northeast monsoon and by existing strike restrictions around the key areas of Hanoi and Haiphong. Through his buildup at Khe Sanh and actions throughout South Vietnam during the past week, the enemy has shown a major capability for waging war in the South. The air campaign against NVN should be conducted to achieve maximum effect in reducing this enemy capability. As a minimum, authority should be granted at this time to reduce the control areas around Hanoi and Haiphong to three, and one and one-half nautical mile radius circles, respectively.

2. (TS) The reduced control areas will expose to attack critical storage areas; transshipment points; and the road, rail, and waterway lines of communication that support movement to and from the important logistic hubs of Hanoi and Haiphong and will provide authority to strike such targets during breaks in the weather. The new control areas will also permit operational commanders greater flexibility to attack secondary, as well as primary, lines of communication to make it more difficult for NVN to accommodate to the interdiction of major routes.

3. (S) Within the concept of operations under the proposed change, control at the Washington level will be maintained over areas depicted in Annexes A and B, encompassing the major population density of Hanoi and Haiphong. Targets which will

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remain within the redefined control areas and which will be under Washington control include the ports, Gia Lam Airfield, railroad yards and shops, shipyards, storage areas, and national control facilities. Precautionary instructions to CINCPAC will be reemphasized to: (1) avoid striking populated areas in attacks on any targets, including those developed by armed reconnaissance, and (2) exercise extreme caution to avoid endangering foreign shipping.

4. (TS) Operations resulting from approval of this request are not likely to result in any major confrontations with the Soviet Union or Communist China. Reaction from both countries is most likely to take the form of continued propaganda and diplomatic pressures.

5. (TS) The proposal contained herein is a means of increasing the effectiveness of air operations against NVN without incurring additional risks. Accordingly, the Joint Chiefs of Staff recommend that you approve as an immediate and urgent measure the elimination of the prohibited and restricted areas associated with Hanoi and Haiphong, and establishment of: (1) a three nautical mile radius circle control area around Hanoi, and (2) a one and one-half nautical mile radius circle control area around Haiphong.

For the Joint Chiefs of Staff:

*Earle G. Wheeler*

EARLE G. WHEELER

Chairman

Joint Chiefs of Staff

Attachments

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ANNEXES A AND B

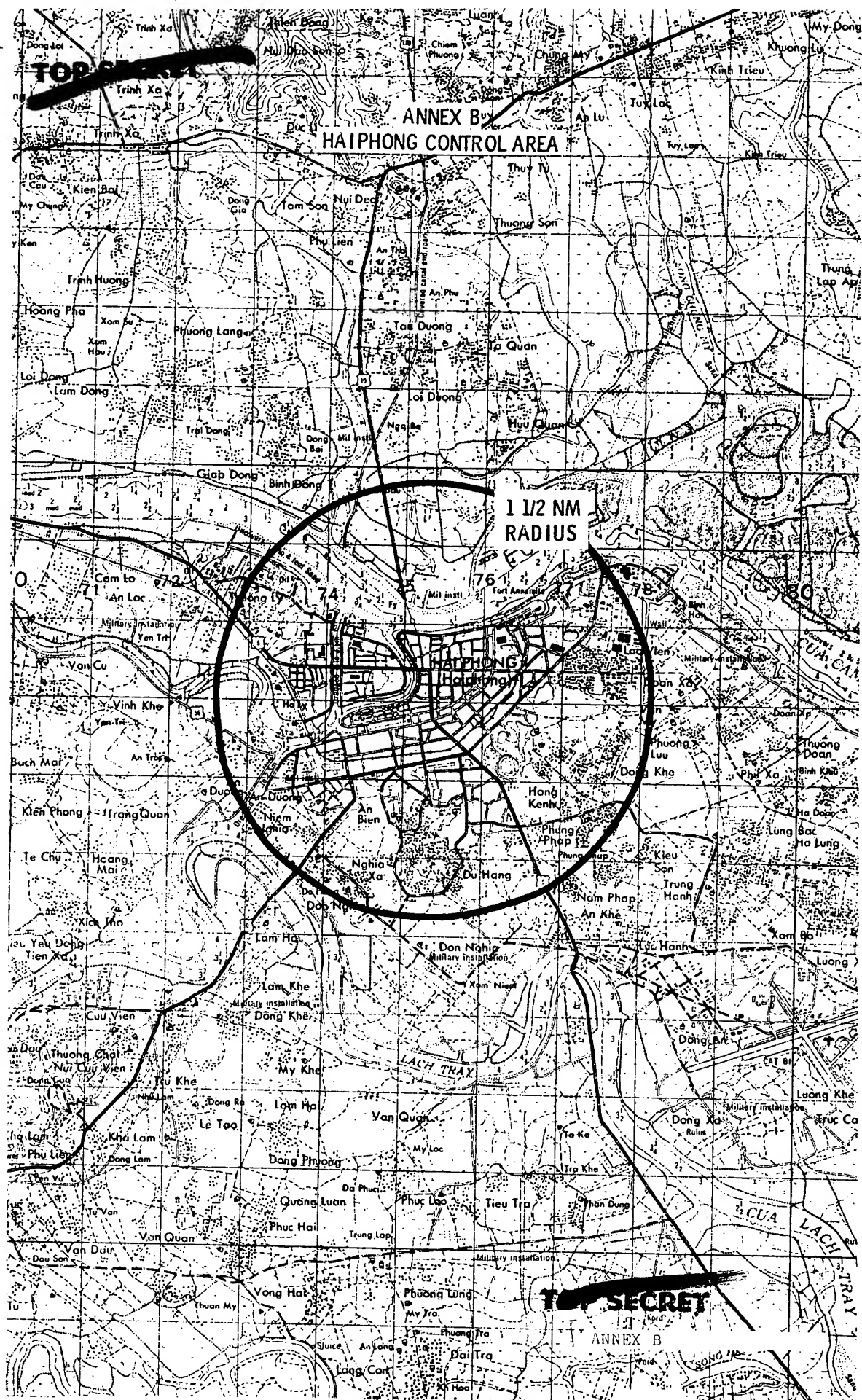
(2 Maps)

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Annexes A and B

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